

News from HIPAA & Medicaid

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR THE BILLING STAFFS OF HEALTH-CARE PROVIDERS:

MEDICAID PROVIDERS: GET READY FOR TESTING NOW TO MAKE SURE YOUR REIMBURSEMENTS DON'T HIT HIPAA SNAGS

OLYMPIA, Wash. – Washington State Medicaid providers, their clearinghouses and practice-management software vendors need to return the forms that were distributed in mid-August so they will be able to test with state computers during September.

Testing is the only way to be sure that claims (837) and eligibility transactions (270-271) will be truly HIPAA-compliant by the national deadline on Oct. 16, 2003. Replacement HIPAA packets are available on the Internet (<http://maa.dshs.wa.gov/dshshipaa>) or by calling 1-800-833-2051.

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Testing sounds more complicated than it really is. Here's a quick outline:

1(a). THE SUBMITTER TEST:

Submitters (clearinghouses, software vendors and providers who file their own electronic claims) can begin testing as soon as they return their forms and register with a special Web site application software called EDIFECS. EDIFECS tests claims and makes sure they are in the right format. Claims that pass EDIFECS are ready for the next level of testing.

1(b). THE PROVIDER TEST: Providers who send their claims through clearinghouses should also begin testing now with their submitters, making sure their filled-out test claims are in the right format and can be processed by the clearinghouse and pass the EDIFECS test. Providers who skip this test may run into problems when their clearinghouses confront live HIPAA claims on October 16. (For coordinating these testing details, providers should call their clearinghouse.)

2. THE NEXT LEVEL: The next test stage, called Level 2, will begin on October 1. Test claims from providers will be sent by submitters into a test version of the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) and its entry system (called ACS EDI GATEWAY). Content-related claims problems could still show up at this stage, but MMIS and its vendor will be able to identify these problems and advise the clearinghouse and providers. (In a nutshell, that's what happens with bad claim files now.)

3. THE SAFETY NET: Finally, Washington providers have a backup if these steps don't work. The safety net is that the current Medicaid claims-processing system will continue to operate after October 16 for a limited time to make sure the transition goes smoothly. **In short, don't turn your old system off until you make sure the new one works.**

4. FREE SOFTWARE: Community providers with relatively few claims will be able to download free software called WINASAP beginning in early September; WINASAP provides data entry screens for creating and sending HIPAA compliant claims to Medicaid. (*Note: Actual WINASAP claims cannot be filed with Medicaid until October 16; providers can file test claims after they download the software.*)

NOTE: Washington State is modifying its current Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) computers to handle the new HIPAA-compliant claims. But Medicaid is not turning off its current claims-handling process, so Washington providers will have a backup if their HIPAA claims run into difficulty. MAA also advises against reverting to paper claims, because the processing takes longer and will delay the entire claims-reimbursement system.

HIPAA HELP (Save these contacts):

- **Affiliated Computer Services (ACS)** hot line for technical testing questions on software or ACS EDI GATEWAY SERVICES: [1-800-833-2051](tel:1-800-833-2051)
- **DSHS HIPAA Web site** for free software and HIPAA-compliance information: <http://maa.dshs.wa.gov/dshshipaa>
- **Federal HIPAA compliance site**, with practical advice for providers and the answers to frequently-asked questions (FAQ): <http://www.cms.gov/hipaa>
- **Executive summary of MAA's HIPAA compliance plan:** http://maa.dshs.wa.gov/dshshipaa/attachments/pdf/HIPAAExecSummary_012804.pdf
- **ACS EDI Gateway, Inc.:** http://www.acs-gcro.com/Medicaid_Accounts/medicaid_accounts.htm
- **POS:** Email provider.relations@acs-inc.com or call [1-800-365-4944](tel:1-800-365-4944) to get in contact with customer service representatives and set up testing. Information is also available on the ACS Web site at: <http://www.acspbmhipaa.com>
- **SPECIAL POS SUPPORT:** Randy Stamp (randy.stamp@acs-inc.com)

HUMAN CONTACT:

Chris Johnson, HIPAA Contingency Planning, 360-725-1239

Bob Burlingame, HIPAA Provider Testing, 360-725-1256

Becky Boutilier, HIPAA Communications Manager, 360-725-2129 (boutibm@dshs.wa.gov)

Jim Stevenson, MAA Communications Director, 360-725-1915 (stevejh2@dshs.wa.gov)

Send email questions to hipaacomunications@dshs.wa.gov

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